

Introduction to Political Science (Pols 110)

Fall, 2005, MW, 5:30 to 6:55pm Prerequisites: none

Course Description

The course will introduce basic arguments concerning the role of information in a democratic society. What kinds of information are valuable? What value does information have? Why do we want information anyway? It seems that most of the information we get is pretty useless (imagine not reading the newspaper for a month - what would you lose?). What is the relationship between information and politics? What is at stake in the way that information occurs in our society? What kinds of bias are there? Can there be an unbiased account?

The second theme of the course will consider analytical questions concerning the way that media can be understood. It should be noted that "media" is not only television and newspapers, but includes anything we communicate through. Different kinds of media have different strengths and weaknesses. What kinds of information can a particular media communicate? How do different media organize information differently? How do media affect how people look at the world?

Instructors

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Textbooks

- George Orwell. *Animal Farm* (NAL: 0-451-526341: \$7.05)
- John Berger. *Ways of Seeing* (Penguin: 0-14-013515-4: \$14.00)
- Neil Postman. *Amusing Ourselves to Death* (Penguin: 0-14-009438-5: \$14.00).
- John Stuart Mill. *On Liberty* (Hackett: 0915144433: \$4.95).

Additional readings will be handed out in class and made available via WebCT

Course Requirements

Students will write two papers (roughly 3 to 5 pages), which critically address topics discussed in class. The paper topics will focus on class readings and students will be evaluated for critical analysis and clarity of thought. For late papers, a full letter grade will be deducted for every weekday (not class) that the paper is late.

The midterm and final exams will be held in class. The final exam will be held during the exam period.

Method of Instruction

Classes will combine discussion and lecture. Because of the heavy emphasis on discussions, the success of the class relies on the involvement of every one of the course participants.

Grading

Papers (2 papers, 20% each)	40% total
Exam (midterm and final, 20% each)	40% total
Participation (quality, quantity, etc.)	20%

Statement Regarding Academic Integrity

Students are required to adhere to accepted standards of academic integrity. Violations of academic integrity include cheating, plagiarism, and complicity in academic dishonesty. It is your responsibility to be aware of behavior that constitute academic dishonesty. We take these policies very seriously; so, if I find a student to be in violation of academic integrity, we will notify the department chairperson and the appropriate dean, the result of which may be expulsion from the college.

Paper Writing and the Learning Center

The Learning Center provides excellent resources to help you succeed in this class. They can help you to develop, organize, and clearly compose your papers. Insofar as paper writing accounts for a large percentage of your final grade, we would highly recommend taking advantage of this resource. We am also available for assistance. Our schedule is flexible, so we can always arrange a time to meet if you cannot stop by during office hours.